PERCÉ

10 YEARS OF SUCCESS

10

2004-2013

An initiative funded by:

RDÉE Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Votre conseil de développement économique

Prince Edward Island CANADA
Office of Immigration, Settlement and Population

Canada

Ten Years of Success

PREMIER'S MESSAGE

ROBERT GHIZ

The Government of Prince Edward Island is proud to be associated with the PERCÉ Program through the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning. Over the past ten years, students participating in the program have had the opportunity to obtain practical work experience.

We recognize that experience in a work environment is essential for youth to find promising employment and contribute to Island prosperity.

We contribute to the future of these students by offering learning opportunities, quality employment and worthwhile career prospects. We also contribute to the reinforcement of our province's human capital.

I would like to highlight the work of RDÉE Prince Edward Island. This organization develops and implements needed innovative approaches for workforce retention and economic development.

Congratulations to all those who ensure the yearly success of the PERCÉ Program.

Robert Ghiz
Premier

Executive Director's message

When RDÉE Prince Edward Island collaborated in the establishment of the PERCÉ program a decade ago, we were simply hoping that the students' work experience and discoveries would convince at least a quarter of the postsecondary participants to settle on PEI on a permanent basis.

After five years, a survey of participants revealed that 64 per cent of these young adults had in fact returned to PEI or had the intention of returning here soon to begin a career and a life. After eight years, the rate had surpassed 80 per cent.

Who would have thought, 10 years ago, that we would attain such incredible results! What other internship or repatriation program can claim such a high rate of success?

We feel we've discovered the magic recipe. We offer our youth the opportunity to rediscover their birth province and the employment opportunities that can be found there. We then give them a chance to work directly in their field of studies, right here on the Island, for a few months; their employer-mentor helps them establish contacts within their industry or sector to help provide a foot in the door, thereby improving their chances of finding a job in PEI once their studies are completed. Finally, we make them realize that PEI can satisfy their personal, social and family needs in addition to providing them with careers in advanced fields.

The main reason so many people have left the Island, throughout the years, is because they say there aren't any jobs on PEI. How many times have we heard that one! In reality, there are good jobs that offer competitive salaries in our province but they are mainly in specialized sectors. The RDÉE has worked hard to determine what these fields are and to try to find interns who could fill these positions.

Over the course of a life, the retention of one single person in our small province represents several million dollars in direct and indirect spending, without even taking into account the jobs that are created and retained to provide services to this person.

In our first 10 years, we delivered the PERCÉ program to 153 Islanders and collaborated with other Atlantic Canadian provinces to deliver it to 45 other young participants. If we multiply this total by a few million dollars, it doesn't take long to see that the few hundred thousand dollars spent to deliver our program have been incredibly well invested.

We are therefore extremely pleased to acknowledge that the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has believed in our program, again this year, as it has since its very beginning. We are also very grateful to see that PERCÉ is the only repatriation program that the province supports financially through the Office of Immigration, Settlement and Population. So a huge thank you goes out to these funders.

We also thank all the employers who have hired our interns over the past decade. You have done them an unbelievable favor.

And to you, our dear current and former PERCÉ participants, we offer our most heartfelt thanks for having the courage to return to PEI when a large number of your friends have headed out to Alberta or Ontario. Thank you for contributing to our provincial economy!

Bonnie Gallant
Executive director

Where does the program come from?

The exodus of young professional Islanders to other Canadian provinces or to the United States is an alarming phenomenon, but it is certainly not a new one. Over the last few decades, many young women and young men have hit the road, attracted by the promise of fame and fortune that would supposedly come at the end of the proverbial Western Canadian rainbow. Many of them left because they believed that the PEI job market doesn't offer any interesting challenges or opportunities. It is however extremely important to mention that this is a false belief that comes from misreading the Island's job market and economic situation.

Acknowledging that this situation was becoming critical, the Baie Acadienne Development Corporation, in partnership with RDÉE Prince Edward Island, proposed the PERCÉ program as part of the solution back in 2004. The main objective of this pilot program was - and is - to convince postsecondary students originally from the Island to return to their home province following their studies to make a life and a career for themselves.

The program, which was established with funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, was named PERCÉ because this French acronym means to pierce or break into the work market. During the program's first few years, Acadian and French-speaking students were the target audience but gradually, PERCÉ began to include students from the English community, which is of course also facing the same "brain-drain" problem. Since 2008, the program annually provides internships for an equal number of participants from both linguistic communities: 10 from the French-speaking community and 10 from the English-speaking community.

PERCÉ has also been quite successful in the other Maritime Provinces. However, lack of funding has prevented New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador from continuing the program. In 2013, we are celebrating PERCÉ's 10th anniversary. This souvenir booklet will provide you with a glimpse into various success stories generated by the PERCÉ program and outlines the benefits it provides to both the French-speaking and English-speaking communities.

For details on the general objectives, participation criteria, orientation week and internship details of the PERCÉ program, please visit www.percepe.ca.

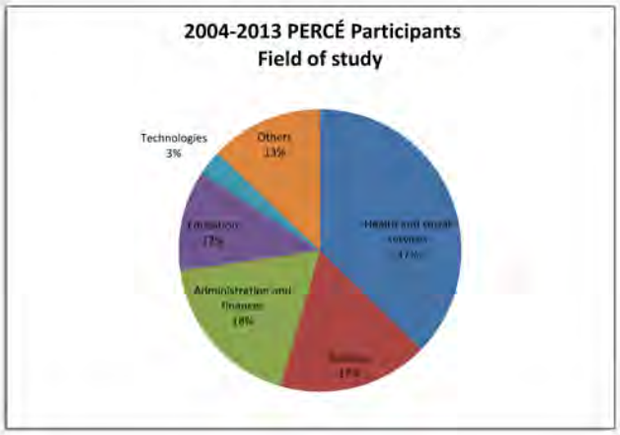
The program reaches its' goals

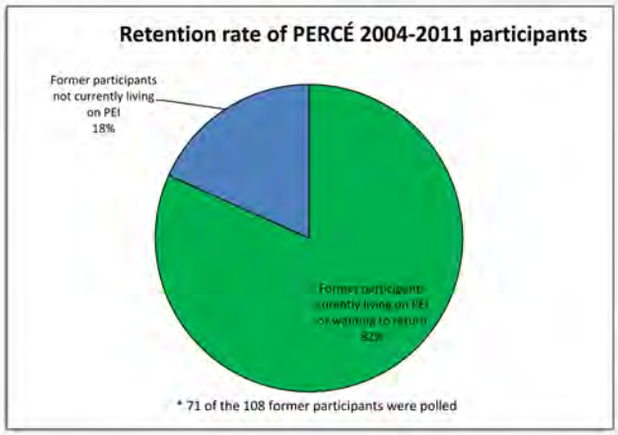
A recent survey of former PERCÉ program participants shows that most of the respondents want to return or have already returned to Prince Edward Island to work after their postsecondary studies. Studies conducted in different Island communities reveal that PERCÉ has successfully attained its objectives.

The last evaluation that was conducted, in 2013, reveals that the majority of respondents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the orientation / training week at the beginning of the program. In the evaluation, participants mentioned that they appreciated the regional visits because they had the opportunity to meet local employers and learn more about job opportunities in those regions. In regards to their 12-week work placement, everyone replied that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their experience. Many participants said the PERCÉ program had helped them find their first job.

The survey filled out by the employers shows that the majority of them were satisfied with the performance of their young interns and that they would be ready to welcome another PERCÉ participant in the future. The employers and the participants both indicated that the biggest challenge in the program is in making a "perfect match" between intern and mentor.

In conclusion, interns and employers said they feel the program is a success and that it must absolutely continue. Everybody thinks PERCÉ benefits youth, employers, communities and the province. The youth bring back to the Island the knowledge and experience they gained during their out-of-province adventures, enabling them to contribute to different aspects of their community.





2004 participant

ABOUT JEAN AUCOIN

In the summer of 2004, Jean was completing the last year of his bachelor's degree in business administration at l'Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. During his internship with the PERCÉ program, Jean was the coordinator of a historical vignettes project at the Acadian Museum of PEI in Miscouche. He was in charge of budgeting, marketing, promotion, management of many employees and project management. After completing his internship, Jean obtained his professional certification in Human Resources at le Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick. In 2006, he started a job with Correctional Service Canada where he worked alternately in personnel recruitment, maintenance of work relations, employee management and management-union relations.

Jean believes his experience with PERCÉ really helped prepare him for his professional career. He notes that he learned a lot during his internship at the Acadian Museum, mainly in relation to skills required for the management of employee and problems. "In my current position, 10 years later, I am still doing some of the same tasks that I did at the Acadian Museum. The funniest thing is that those are the ones I prefer." Jean mentions that it is important to acquire experience in one's field to facilitate job searches after graduation. He also feels it is really important to know if your field of study actually jives with your tastes and ambitions. He strongly recommends the PERCÉ program to all young Islanders.

2005 participant

ABOUT JOSÉE GALLANT

Josée had just finished her second year in the social services program at Ottawa University, in Ontario, when she took part in the PERCÉ program. During her internship, she worked with the Association des femmes acadiennes et francophones de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, now Actions Femmes ÎPÉ. She served as event coordinator in charge of mobilization and social awareness. Her background in social work was really useful for planning events related to the prevention of violence, poverty and injustice. She was also in charge of conducting a study on the relationship between work and family. Upon completion of her bachelor's degree, Josée started her master's degree in social services in Ottawa. She then worked in Child Protection Services and is now working in Mental Health in Prince Edward Island. Returning to the Island was always a priority for her. It was the only place she could see herself raising a family, mostly because it is where her roots are.

Josée feels her experience with PERCÉ was really useful because it gave her opportunities to discover the options that were available to her. She acknowledges that it is sometimes difficult for postsecondary students to break into the job market and even harder to find a position in one's field of studies. She strongly recommends the program because it helps young people get a first job after graduation and thereby get some much-needed experience. "My internship was really beneficial to me; it opened my eyes to the many different possibilities available on the Island and I was also able to meet many professionals in my field of study."

2006 Participant

ABOUT ANNIE GALLANT

Before her participation in the PERCÉ prgram, Annie was wrapping up her first year as a Business Administration undergrad,majoring in accounting, at l'Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. She also worked at the Grant Thornton LLP accounting firm in Summerside; she had the opportunity to return there for two years after her graduation. During her stint at Grant Thornton, she was also studying at the Atlantic School of Chartered Accountancy, a professional school offering courses needed to become a chartered accountant. In September 2010, she passed the school's professional exam. In January 2012, she started working at MNP LLP, an accounting firm in Fort McMurray, Alberta. She believes her education and her work experience helped her find that job quite easily. Annie wants to return to the Island in the near future because she wants to plant her adult roots in her province of birth: "I am sure that we will be back on the Island someday soon because the Island represents my family, my culture and my future."

Back in the summer of 2006, Annie did her administrative assistant internship at la Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin in Summerside. She was in charge of the reception desk and also helped with accounting. She got the opportunity to use the program Simply Accounting, a valuable tool she still uses on a daily basis. She strongly recommends PERCÉ since she believes the program gave her a chance to gain experience in her field of studies, which is always a challenge. She believes PERCÉ is ideal because it helps find summer jobs directly related to one's field of studies. She considers herself lucky to have participated in the program at the beginning of her studies because it allowed her to determine if she really liked her field of studies and if she wanted to pursue in that direction. She hopes that a lot of other postsecondary students will have a chance to take part in this program in the years to come.

2007 Participant

ABOUT BRIAN GALLANT

Brian Gallant studied sports administration at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ont., before returning to PEI. He participated in the PERCÉ program in 2007 at the end of his first year of studies. He did his work placement with le Comité régional des Jeux d'Acadie de l' Î-P.-É. as an assistant coordinator. According to Brian, PERCÉ opened a door to work in his field and opened his eyes to the job possibilities available on Prince Edward Island. The program also provided him with valuable tools for his professional life that he has used numerous times in his different work experiences.

During his summer breaks from university, he worked with various non-profit organizations like Jeunesse Acadienne and l'Exposition agricole et le Festival acadien de la région Évangéline. He also did an internship with Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment, owners of the Maple Leafs, the Raptors, the Toronto FC and the Marlies of Toronto. In 2011, at the end of his studies, Brian worked for the organizing committee of the Jeux de la francophonie canadienne in Sudbury.

He is currently an event coordinator at la Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin. He is in charge of coordinating activities for Jeunesse Acadienne and l'Association des francophones de l'âge d'or de l'Î.-P.-É. Even though his current position is not entirely related to his field of studies, Brian mentions that his administration degree is still really useful in his position as coordinator of a non-profit organization. Every day, he still uses the skills he learned during his years in Sudbury. Every three years, Brian uses his knowledge in sports to help the PEI delegation of Les Jeux de la francophonie canadienne. Brian also volunteers with many sports-oriented organizations, including the Evangeline Recreation Commission and Les Jeux de l'Acadie, where he did his internship in 2007.

Brian says even though he plans to travel, he still wants to settle down on PEI in the long term. "After having lived in Moncton, Sudbury and Toronto, I realize what the Island offers in terms of quality of life; my sense of belonging to the Island's Acadian community will make me stay here forever." In conclusion, he considers himself lucky to have a job he loves and to live where he wants to live.

2008 Participant

ABOUT GUY GALLANT

Before his participation in the PERCÉ program, Guy was studying public relations at Cité collégiale in Ottawa. He was finishing his first year when he was hired for a 2008 internship at the provincial MLA offices. He was in charge of assisting Members of the Legislative Assembly with research and communication. He notes that his participation in the program helped him to find a job on Parliament Hill after his return to Ottawa.

He is currently a political advisor for the provincial government's Executive Council. He advises the premier and MLAs on several matters, including Intergovernmental Affairs and communications. His studies in public relations are very useful, especially those related to communications, media relations and crisis management.

According to Guy, it is important that youth temporarily leave PEI to gain experience. He feels it would give them a better appreciation of what we have here on the Island. "I consider myself really lucky to have a job I love and to have the chance to work on the Island."

Guy says the PERCÉ program was really beneficial for his career. He believes that without PERCÉ, he would not have his current position. People he met during his work placement helped him to find his place in the political arena. "PERCÉ is an important program because more and more employers are seeking employees with experience. Work placements give the opportunity to gain relevant experience in your field of study, and help with the job search after graduation."

2009 Participant

ABOUT GERMAIN ARSENAULT

Before taking part in the PERCÉ program, Germain was in his last year of business administration at l'Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. In 2010, he obtained his undergraduate degree in business administration, majoring in marketing.

During his internship, Germain was the marketing coordinator at le Centre Expo-Festival in Abram-Village. He was in charge of marketing and publicity for the 2009 summer season. He was also responsible for planning some aspects of the centre's dinner-theatre and many other events. In 2010, a few weeks after his graduation, the Centre Expo-Festival offered him the same position he had held the previous summer. He was later hired as coordinator of the 2012 Bicentennial for the parishes of Egmont Bay and Mont-Carmel. Currently, Germain works for la Fédération culturelle de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard as a special events coordinator. He hopes to stay on the Island but is keeping his options open.

Germain believes the PERCÉ program is instrumental in the professional development of young Islanders. He feels the program provides "a good overview of opportunities available here on Prince Edward Island." He adds that PERCÉ helps provide opportunities to acquire abilities and skills before starting one's ideal career. He believes work placements are really important because some things are not taught in school and more and more employers are looking for employees with experience.

2010 Participant

ABOUT

KIMBERLY COCHRANE

Before taking part in PERCÉ, Kimberly was completing a major in French and a minor in math at Memorial University in St.John's, Newfoundland. In the summer of 2010, she worked as a student assistant at Humber Valley Resort. She was in charge of a tourist booth containing a lot of different brochures that offer various activities for tourists. She loved the opportunity to interact with people and also to try out her French skills.

After PERCÉ, she continued on with her French degree at Memorial. She also went on to complete a bachelor of education (intermediate/secondary) from the same university. She is now employed with the Western School District in Newfoundland and teaches both French and math to Grades 4-9 in Daniel's Harbour. She is really excited about her new position and is extremely happy to use the French skills she has learned over the past few years. Staying in Newfoundland was really important for her because that is where her family is. It's also where she feels she belongs. "My experience with the PERCÉ program was great. I loved the opportunity to speak French whenever possible." Kimberly notes that PERCÉ has given her the confidence to speak her second language in public and realizes that it will be an asset for a future career.

2010 Participant

ABOUT MARIELLE LANDRY

Marielle Landry participated in the PERCÉ Program in the summer of 2010 in her home community of Isle Madame, Nova Scotia. During her work placement, she was a finance intern at Centre communautaire culturel La Picasse in Petit-de-Grat. She was in charge of organizing and verifying financial documents, balancing cash flow and receipts.

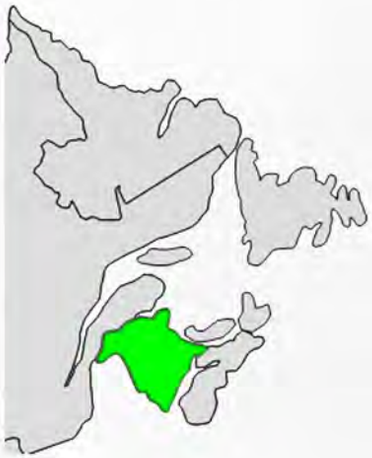
Marielle recently graduated from the administration program at Université de Moncton where she specialized in finances. She is currently working for Allstate Insurance in Moncton. She loves working in the financial world, especially due to all the advancement possibilities. She is pleased to be able to work in her field of study and she is very thankful to PERCÉ for the job experience she gained during her internship.

Marielle believes that PERCÉ started her career adventure: "This job really opened a lot of doors; the two following summers, I worked in the finance department in the Town of Richmond. I received good references that lead me to my actual job." Marielle strongly recommends the program because it's essential to gain experience before graduation. The internship helps students find out if the occupation is truly meant for them. She believes that work experience is essential for all post-secondary students who desire to pursue any career. She would love PERCÉ to be available again for Nova Scotian youth since it provides such a rewarding experience.

2010 Participant

ABOUT

NAÏKA ST-ARNAUD HIVON



During the summer of 2010, Naïka participated in the PERCÉ program as an intern at the francophone radio station CJSE/BOFM. At the time, she had already finished her third year in the linguistic program at l'Université Laval, in Québec City. During her internship, she was in charge of the reception desk, hosting radio shows and writing commercials. Her work experience was interesting because it gave her the opportunity to see the types of jobs that would be possible for her once she received her linguistic diploma. She believes PERCÉ opened her eyes about these possibilities and gave her the motivation to keep studying.

PERCÉ was a good experience for her because it got her working in a job where her main tools were words. Naïka is still studying in Québec but she plans on returning to New Brunswick. She would like to work for the Department of Education. She wants to contribute to the linguistic development of her province. She believes postsecondary students in her province should have access to the PERCÉ program. "I think the work internships should be longer in order to give students more experience and more money to pay their student fees." She mentions that she found orientation week very useful. Naïka thinks it's unfortunate that funding for the program was cut in her province since the program would have been really useful for New Brunswick youth.

2010 Participant

ABOUT AMIE BELL

Amie Bell participated in the PERCÉ Program in the summer of 2010. At the time, she had just completed the second year of her bachelor in kinesiology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She always had a passion for rehabilitation sciences and the PERCÉ program was the perfect outlet to further explore the various career options that would be available to her once she completed her postsecondary education.

Her internship with PERCÉ was at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown, where she worked primarily in the Provincial Rehabilitation Unit as well as in the Physical Medicine Department. While in the Rehab Unit, her position focused on spending time with patients, helping them with their daily therapy exercises, as well as aiding the fabri nurses with their daily tasks. While in the Physical Medicine Department she had the opportunity to job shadow physical therapists, occupational therapists and prosthetists. She was able to participate and observe therapists with their patients as well as aid the prosthetists in the fabrication and fitting of prosthetic devices.

Since the PERCÉ program, she has gone on to complete her bachelor's degree at Dalhousie University and is currently working as a kinesiologist in a privately owned chiropractic clinic in Edmonton, Alberta. As a kinesiologist, she sees patients with a wide variety of injuries. Her goal is to help them regain strength that may have been lost due to injury or chronic pain, while tailoring their program to their specific injury to prevent further issues. Her aspirations are to continue her education in the field of prosthetics, largely influenced by her experience working in the Physical Medicine Department as an intern with the PERCÉ program.

"PERCÉ gave me the opportunity to explore a wide variety of careers that pertained to my education. Being able to gain clinical experience was a staple to my professional life and most definitely pointed me in the direction I would like to take to further my education and career in the future. It allowed me to view the career opportunities that are available on Prince Edward Island within the health sciences field, which will advance any future decisions I make in regards to returning to the Island."

2011 Participant

ABOUT PAMELA-LYNN HUDSON

Pamela-Lynn was studying psychology and biology at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., when she participated in the PERCÉ program. She did her internship in the Prince County Hospital Emergency Department. She is currently completing a masters of arts degree in health promotion at Dalhousie University in Halifax, N.S. Her university research examines social determinants of HIV and Hepatitis C prevention and risk among youth. She is currently employed as a research assistant with the Dalhousie Gender and Health Promotion Studies Unit. This September, she will be entering medical school at Memorial University in Newfoundland.

She is planning to one day return to PEI to work there. "Next year I will be entering medical school at Memorial University and following this, I hope to work as a rural family physician in PEI."

PERCÉ provided her with hands-on experience in a hospital setting, preparing her for her current education in both health promotion and medicine.

2012 Participant

ABOUT BRIANNA PAUGH

Before PERCÉ, Brianna was studying radiology at UPEI. She was also working at a gas station in the summers between school years. She was very interested in sciences and was looking for a stimulating job that would allow her to stay on the Island. She did her work placement at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown, specifically in the diagnostic imaging department. After her work placement, she was accepted into the radiography program at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown. She is currently finishing her program and hopes to get a job in her field here on the Island.

Brianna really appreciated her experience with the PERCÉ program. She feels her internship was a great way for her to see if she actually liked doing what she had chosen to study. She notes that her internship was very helpful and that it gave her confidence in her choice: "It was a great opportunity to test the waters out in what I chose for a career before my program at UPEI started!" She believes it is important to know if what you are planning to do for the rest of your life is actually something you really enjoy. She said that she knows that her work placement will prove to be handy in the future when she will be applying for jobs after graduation. She thanks the program for such a great experience. She really recommends the program to everyone. "Great working environment and lovely people."

2013 Participant

ABOUT

TYLER PALMER

Tyler Palmer participated in PERCÉ during the summer of 2013 after obtaining an engineering diploma from UPEI. After his internship, he will be attending Dalhousie University to pursue a mechanical engineering degree. He hopes to graduate with a bachelor of engineering within two years. He plans to return to PEI to start a career in engineering and work at an Island company for four years. At this point, he should have enough engineering experience to apply to become a professional engineer.

Thanks to the PERCÉ program, Tyler had the opportunity to work as an engineering assistant at Atlantic Advanced Power Technologies. "It has been an excellent experience for me, both in terms of professional development and furthering my engineering skills. It has been a great supplement to my education and I do not think I would have gotten this position without the funding and help from PERCÉ."

After graduating from Dalhousie, Tyler is planning to return to Prince Edward Island to start a career. Like many Islanders, he believes it's a great place to live and start a family. He mentions that it is sometimes hard to find career opport"unities for new graduates, especially in sciences. He wants to contribute to the Island's scientific industry and demonstrate that PEI has skilled workers. He knows that companies will only invest in the province if they know that they can hire skilled and competent people. He would be interested in starting his own company and contributing to the Island's economy.

The PERCÉ program has allowed him to connect with professionals in many different fields. During orientation week, he gained insights into the different opportunities that PEI has to offer in aerospace, heath, education, business and non-profit industries. He was also able to network with peers that were studying in those fields. His internship also helped him meet professionals in his own field. "Through my work placement, I have connected with people who own multiple companies and who now know that I am a competent and skilled worker. I have no doubt that I could return to work for them in the future."